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Fighting the Revolution

N. Makhno

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Freedom Pamphlets

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The three articles printed in this pamphlet were originally published in the early 1970's as part of a series of Freedom Press anarchist pamphlets. This new edition retains the introduction to the pamphlet 'The Unsung Heroes – Makhno and Durruti' and also reprints Zapata's 'Manifesto to Mexicans'.

The Unsung Heroes

Organised warfare has been a concomitant of private property society for at least five thousand years. From barbarism through chattel slavery and feudalism, to present-day capitalism, man has fought man over property and mineral rights, land and the means of producing and distributing the wealth that the peoples of the world have created. Ruling groups and classes throughout human history have, moreover, enlisted the support of their subject classes in the struggle over property.

But during the last hundred years or so men and women have begun to challenge their masters' right to force or encourage their subjects to fight on their behalf. People calling themselves anarchists, libertarians and, in a few instances, marxists, have argued — often in the face of derision and persecution — that the vast majority of the people of all nations, the peasants and the workers, have no material interest in the wars and conflicts of their masters; that war between the rulers of nations cannot benefit them in any way; that they should, in fact, unite against their respective rulers and owners of property, strip them of their power and wealth and make the means of life the common heritage of all, regardless of race, nationality or sex.

These anarchists and libertarians were not pacifists in the absolute sense of the word. They did not love their enemies or show the other cheek. Theirs was what has been termed a 'class' position. They argued that if circumstances warranted the taking up of arms in the interest of the masses, or in 'the defence of the revolution', they would do so. They said that the workers should, if need be, defend themselves against counter-revolution. These were the views of both Marx and Bakunin. And, of course, over the years many anarchists and libertarian marxists have taken up arms in defence of what they considered were their and the workers' interests. This has happened in a number of countries, including Mexico, Russia and the Ukraine, and Spain. In Russia and the Ukraine, and in Spain, anarchist forces defended their communes, their collective farms, factories and means of transportation, their 'revolution', against both Communist (Bolshevik) and Fascist (Fala..gist) attack.

Both anarchists and libertarian marxists have always been quick to point out that they have no leaders, that they have no need of leaders ('Strong men need no leaders; they are their own leaders', Emiliano Zapata, the Mexican anarchist revolutionary, is reported as having remarked), but the anarchist 'armies' of both the Ukraine and Spain produced and threw up commanders and, in the view of many bourgeois observers, brilliant and dynamic leaders. The brief careers of the two most famous (or infamous) anarchist military 'leaders' are worth remembering, if only because there has been, both by the political right and left, a 'conspiracy of silence' regarding their activities and exploits. If mentioned at all, both have been called bandits by Communists and Fascists alike.*

* 'In addition to minor bands which carried on destruction in various parts of the country, Makhno, Grigoriev, Skoropadsky, Denikin, Petlura and many others were plundering on a large scale. Under the pretence of fighting against Bolshevism, brigands of every description despoiled the country, until they brought it to almost complete ruin' (Moscow Narodny Bank *Monthly Review*, December 1934, page 9).

'. . . the picturesque Anarchist bandit-leader Makhno in the southern Ukraine . . .' (Maurice Dobb, *Soviet Economic Development Since 1917*, page 105).

Nestor Makhno

Nestor Ivanovich Makhno was born on October 27th 1889, the youngest son of a poor peasant couple in Gulai-Polya, a large Ukranian settlement of the district of Alexandrovsk, in the province and department of Ekaterinoslav between the River Dneiper and the Sea of Azov. Nestor was only eleven months' old when his father died. At the age of seven his mother sent him out to work as a herd-boy tending sheep and cows on the farms of the rich, mainly German, kulak farmers and of the local nobles. When he was eight he managed to attend school part-time, but received no schooling after he was twelve. Makhno then found employment as a full-time farm labourer and, until he was seventeen, as a foundry worker. He developed a strong hatred towards the nobles, employers and kulak farmers, all of whom he considered to be 'exploiters'.

In 1906 he joined the Gulai-Polya Anarchist Group. Makhno had become an anarcho-communist. But two years later he was brought to trial accused of 'terrorism' and other anarchist activities. A local police chief had been murdered. He was sentenced to be hanged, but because of his youth his sentence was commuted to forced labour for life. He was sent to the grim Butyrki jail in Moscow. Once there, he began to rebel against prison discipline and was often placed in solitary confinement and put in chains or irons. Butyrki was, like most Russian prisons, cold and very damp. Makhno contracted pulmonary tuberculosis.

When the well-known anarchist revolutionary Peter Archinov was put in Butyrki for smuggling anarchist literature into Russia, he and Nestor Makhno soon became firm friends. Archinov was older than Makhno and was much better educated. He helped Makhno educate himself, and told him much of the ideas and ideals of Bakunin and Kropotkin.

On March 1st 1917, Makhno, Archinov and indeed all Russian political prisoners, were released from jail by the new Provisional Government. Peter Archinov stayed on in Moscow and became an active member of the Moscow

Federation of Anarchists, while Nestor Makhno immediately returned to Gulai-Polya in the Ukraine. As soon as he arrived he helped the local peasants organise a free commune and soviet. He became chairman of the Regional Farm Workers' Union, and later president of the Gulai-Polya Soviet of Peasants' and Workers' Deputies. "In August 1917", writes Paul Avrich, "as head of the soviet, Makhno recruited a small band of armed peasants and set about expropriating the estates of the neighbouring gentry, and distributing the land to the poor peasants". To the peasants of Gulai-Polya, he was another Stenka Razin. "He thus made himself the mortal enemy of the rich and of the local bourgeois groups", commented Peter Archinov. And of him George Woodcock says that he was "a dynamic and Dostoyevskian personality".

Brest-Litovsk

The First World War plunged Tsarist Russia into social and economic chaos, mainly because her industrial resources, agriculture and means of transportation were so backward and inadequate to bear the strain of modern warfare. By the beginning of 1917 the situation, particularly on the food front, was desperate. Moreover, the troops at the front were, in the words of Lenin, voting against the war with their feet. They were deserting in their hundreds of thousands.

Between March 8th and 12th, strikes against the war and mass demonstrations by housewives in Petrograd (formerly St Petersburg) soon developed into a general strike with workers disarming police and military. Following the March (February by the old calendar) Revolution, a provisional government came to power which attempted to continue the war. By November it had become completely discredited, and on November 6th the largely Bolshevik-controlled military committee of the Petrograd Soviet staged an armed insurrection in the city. The Bolsheviks were acting on instructions from their Central Committee, which had decided to seize power and declare itself the new government. The new government was determined to stay in power, and to achieve this it was essential that Russia withdraw from the war. After protracted negotiations with the Germans, the Soviet delegation headed by Leon Trotsky signed the draft treaty at Brest-Litovsk on March 3rd 1918.

As a result of the treaty, the German and Austrian armies marched into the Ukraine and set up a puppet regime of the Hetman Skorodpadsky. The Germans then began to terrorise the population. They carried off huge quantities of wheat, livestock and poultry by the trainload. When the Ukranian peasants began to resist, many were flogged and shot. "It was therefore natural", says Archinov, "that this new condition strongly accelerated the march of the movements previously begun under Petlura (the Ukranian nationalist leader – PN) and the Bolsheviks. Everywhere, primarily in the villages, insurrectionary acts started to occur against the gentry and the Austo-Germans. It was thus that began the vast movement of the Ukranian peasants, which was later given the name of the Revolutionary Insurrection". It was also completely spontaneous.

At the time of this occupation of the Ukraine by the Austro-Germans, a secret revolutionary committee came into existence which gave Makhno the task of creating fighting units of workers and peasants to defend themselves against the 'imperialists', and to struggle against their own native rulers. Unfortunately, however, his partisan forces were too weak. Moreover, the local bourgeoisie had put a price on his head. Forced into hiding, he later

retreated from the cities of Taranrog, Rostov and Tsaritsin, and then proceeded northwards. Almost alone, Makhno finally made his way to Moscow, arriving in June 1918.

On his arrival he went to see Peter Kropotkin. They discussed the situation in Russia and the Ukraine at great length. Makhno also saw Lenin, but the two men soon realised that they had very little in common.

"The majority of anarchists think and write about the future", declared Lenin, "without understanding the present; that is what divides us Communists from you anarchists". Makhno retorted that anarchists were not utopian dreamers but realistic men of action. "It is we anarchists and social revolutionaries who are beating back the nationalists and privileged classes in the Ukraine", he said. "Perhaps I am mistaken", admitted Lenin.

The Revolutionary War

Makhno and his anarchist supporters were not only concerned with defending their communes but with spreading the revolution and expropriating the property of the landed gentry and rich kulak farmers. In the Southern Ukraine, observes Voline, the peasants and workers became conscious of their historic mission. "They raised the black flag of anarchism and set forth on the anti-authoritarian road of the free organisation of the workers".

In July 1918 Makhno returned to Gulai-Polya. When he arrived, he found that his mother's house had been burned down by the Germans and his brother shot (another brother was shot by Denikin's White Army and the third was murdered by the Bolsheviks). Makhno was almost immediately captured by the Germans. He was caught carrying libertarian pamphlets. A Jew who had known him personally for a long time succeeded in saving his life by paying a considerable sum of money for his release. The news of his release soon spread throughout the area. Meetings were held and leaflets distributed. Makhno declared that the workers and peasants should take their fate into their own hands. The Austro-Germans, with the assistance of their puppet Hetman Skorodpadsky, had handed the estates back to the nobles and rich kulaks. So, once again, almost overnight Makhno ". . . organised a detachment of partisans and under the black flag of anarchism, launched a series of daring raids upon the Austro-Germans and Hetmanites, and upon the manors of the local nobility" (Avrich). He began to attack the large estates in the region between the Dneiper and the Sea of Azov. In September 1918 his forces were strong enough to capture Gulai-Polya. Within three weeks the anarchist partisans operated over hundreds of square miles.

By November the Austro-Germans withdrew from Russia and the Ukraine. The armistice had been signed. Makhno had become a legend ("an anarchist Robin Hood", according to Woodcock) throughout the Southern Ukraine. His forces during this period were able to capture large quantities of arms from the retreating Germans. "Every raid", continues Woodcock, "brought arms, supplies and horses, and the recruits came in by the hundred to Makhno's headquarters (in Gulai-Polya – PN), which seem to have been unknown only by the authorities".

Rapidity of movement, extraordinary mobility, was Makhno's chief tactic. Travelling on horseback and in tachanki, with machine guns mounted, the Makhnovist insurrectionary army moved swiftly back and forth across the open steppe between the Dneiper and the Sea of Azov – from Berdiansk to Taranrog, from Lugansk to Ekaterinoslav. But the Hetman Skorodpadsky still

held the capital, Kiev. At Ekaterinoslav, Makhno encountered the organised forces of the nationalist Petlura. Here Makhno used the Trojan Horse ruse. He loaded a train with his troops, and sent it right into the railway station of Ekaterinoslav. The city was captured and the Petlurists defeated. But a few days later, they counter-attacked and regained the city from the insurrectionary army. Makhno retreated, but was not pursued.

From the end of November 1918 to June 1919, Makhno's region east of the Dneiper was virtually free of external political or military authority. The Austrians, Germans, Hetmanists and Ukranian nationalists had all been driven away. And neither the Whites not the Reds were yet strong enough to fill the void. During this period the workers and peasants attempted, within the limitations thrust upon them, to reconstruct their society on libertarian, free communal, lines. They were only partially successful.

Anarchist Society

Makhno's ideas were set out in a pamphlet entitled 'General Theses of the Revolutionary Insurgents concerning the Free Workers' Soviet'. According to Makhno, workers' councils or soviets should be completely free of political parties; they should be based on the principle of social equality and social need, and the workers should obey only their own collective will with no one exercising any power over anyone else.

Of the free communes which came into existence during this period of relative peace in the Southern Ukraine, Makhno describes them somewhat naively thus:

"In every one of their communes were a few anarchist peasants, but the majority of their members were not anarchist. Nevertheless, in their communal life they behaved with that anarchist solidarity of which, in ordinary life, only toilers are capable, whose natural simplicity has not yet been affected by the political poison of the cities. . . .

Every commune comprised ten families of peasants and workers, ie a total of 100, 200 or 300 members. By decision of the Regional Congress of agrarian communes every commune received a normal amount of land, ie as much as its members could cultivate, situated in the vicinity of the commune . . . .

The majority of the labourers saw in the agrarian communes the happy germ of a new social life, which would continue as the revolution approached the climax of its triumphal and creative march, to develop and grow, and to stimulate the organisation of an analogous society in the country as a whole, or at least in the villages and the hamlets of our region." (La Revolution Russe en Ukraine).

The first commune, called 'Rosa Luxemburg' after the Polish revolutionary socialist, came into existence near the town of Provkovskoi. At first it contained only a couple of dozen members, but soon reached 300. It was based entirely on non-authoritarian principles and, according to Voline who had visited it, accomplished very good results and ultimately exercised a great influence over the peasants of the area. Seven kilometres from Gulai-Polya another commune was set up which was simply called 'Commune No 1'. Twenty kilometres away two more were established. Others then began elsewhere.

All these communes, says Voline, were quite freely created (from the land, livestock and farm implements confiscated from the estates of the nobles and large landowners) by the spontaneous impulse of the peasants, although later on they were alloted to the peasants by 'authority' of the Regional Congress

of Peasants, Workers and Insurgents. The communes of the region were based on Kropotkin's ideal of Mutual Aid. Everyone – men, women and children – worked according to their ability and within the limitations of a society engulfed in civil war, receiving according to their needs. "The organising functions", continues Voline, "were confined to comrades who could fulfil them adequately. Their task accomplished, these comrades rejoined the common work side by side with the other members of the commune. These sound, serious principles were due to the fact that the communes arose from the workers themselves and their development followed a natural course". Makhno never exerted any pressure on the peasants against their will. But he did attempt to win over the workers of such cities as Aleksandrovsk and Ekaterinoslav. Except for a small minority, he failed. For not only did he not fully comprehend the complexities of an urban economy, but his 'army' (now between 20,000 and 50,000 strong) was always on the move. "The instability of the situation prevented positive work", admitted Voline years after.

Enter the Whites

On January 23rd, 1919, the First Regional Congress of Peasants, Workers and Insurgents took place in the new town of Greater Mikhailovka. Its main concern was the likelihood of an invasion by the White forces of Denikin, who had become increasingly active on the south-eastern border of the region. The Second Congress met three weeks later and established a Regional Military Council (Soviet) of Peasants, Workers and Partisans. It also resolved to call on the inhabitants of the region to answer 'a general voluntary mobilisation'. The response was enormous. Many were not able to join Makhno, however, because of the shortage of arms and ammunition.

In the early part of 1919 the Bolsheviks sought the help of Makhno. Relations between the Red Army and the anarchist partisans remained reasonably friendly – at least on the surface. In March Makhno and the Reds entered into an agreement for joint action against the Whites. The main clauses included: the Insurrectionary Army would maintain its own internal organisation whilst at the same time it would be a division of the Red Army; it would not be removed from its own area, and it would retain its name as the Revolutionary Insurrectionary Army and continue to fly its black flags. But the honeymoon didn't last long.

On April 10th a Third Congress met at Gulai-Polya. There were over 70 delegates representing two million workers and peasants. But whilst the Congress was in session, a telegram arrived from the commander of the Red Army in the Dneiper area, declaring the Congress 'counter-revolutionary' and, therefore, banned. The delegates ignored the telegram, although Makhno replied several days later. The Communists – and particularly Trotsky – openly attacked Makhno as an 'anarcho-bandit'. Said Trotsky in his now notorious pronouncement: "It would be better to yield the whole Ukraine to Denikin, a frank counter-revolutionary, who could be easily compromised", than let Makhno arouse the masses against the Bolsheviks as well as the Whites.

In May two members of Cheka (the Communist secret police) were sent to assassinate Makhno. They were caught and executed. The final breach between the Reds and Makhno occurred when the local Soviets and the Insurrectionary Army called a Fourth Congress for June 15th, and invited rank-and-file members of the Red Army to send representatives. Trotsky, the commander-in-chief of the Red Army, was furious. On June 4th he banned the Congress

and declared Makhno an outlaw. He then sent Communist troops to destroy the 'Rosa Luxemburg Commune. They were only partially successful. A few days later Denikin's forces arrived and completed the job, wiping out all the other communes in the area, liquidating the local (non-Party) Soviets and murdering many of the population. The Bolsheviks and the Red Army under Trotsky allowed Denikin to advance in the hope that he would destroy Makhno and his partisans for them.

Denikin was now able to continue his massive drive towards Moscow. During August and September 1919, the Makhnovist insurgents were relentlessly driven towards the western borders of the Ukraine. But, according to Voline who took part in the exhausting retreat, Makhno refused to despair. He now called back those of his partisans who had stayed with a number of Red Army divisions. Voline gives us a vivid description of what he describes as a "kingdom on wheels" (republic would have been a better word!). He writes in La Revolution Inconnue (The Unknown Revolution):

"... the Makhnovist army was joined and followed in its retreat by thousands of peasant families in flight from their homes with their livestock and belongings. It was a veritable migration. . . . The summer of 1919 was exceptionally dry in the Ukraine. . . . But the army did not allow its movements to be influenced by this mass of fugitives. It kept strictly to its course, except for the units which went off to protect the main body – the cavalry in particular were always fighting. The infantry, when it was not fighting, led the march of the army. It was carried in tatchankas. Each of these vehicles, which were drawn by two horses, carried a driver on the front seat and two soldiers behind them. In some sections a machine gun was installed on the seat between them. The artillery brought up the rear.

A huge black flag floated over the first carriage. The slogans; 'LIBERTY OR DEATH. and 'THE LAND TO THE PEASANTS, THE FACTORIES TO THE WORKERS', were embroidered in silver on two sides".

The retreat laster four months At first Makhno tried to dig in on the Dneiper at Alexanrovsk; but he soon had to abandon the city.

The Tide Changes

During this period the Red Army in the Ukraine had become completely demoralised. In June, nearly all the Red Army regiments in the Crimea mutinied. Makhno had already planned this. And by forced march they set out to search for the Insurrectionary Army. They found it at the beginning of August at Dobrovelitchkova in the district of Kherson.

Makhno's forces once again became powerful. Soon after he halted his retreat. The tide was turning. He had cavalry which numbered nearly 3,000 and a machine-gun regiment of 500 guns.

The Insurrectionary Army then began to go on to the offensive. Denikin was thrown back. Makhno's forces, however, soon ran out of ammunition. And Denikin counter-attacked with fresh troops. Finally, Makhno had to retreat again, this time over 250 miles into the department of Kiev. Denikin attempted to encircle the Insurrectionary Army, but did not succeed. The fighting lasted day and night. And, yet again, Makhno retreated as far as the city of Uman. Here, Makhno encountered the forces of Petlura, who were also in a state of war with the Whites. The Petlurists declared that they had no wish to get involved in a conflict with Makhno – so a rather shaky 'pact' was agreed between the two groups.

On the evening of September 26th 1919, Makhno played his last card. For months he had been retreating west. He and his comrades suddenly changed direction, and during the night the entire Insurgent Army, with the machine-gunners in the van, attacked the Whites. Later, Makhno's cavalry swept in against Denikin's flank. After a long and bloody battle, Denikin's troops were routed. "The route of their retreat", wrote Peter Archinov afterwards, "was strewn with corpses for a distance of two or three kilometres. And, however horrible this spectacle was to some, it was only the natural outcome of the duel between Denikin's army and the Makhnovists. During the whole pursuit, the former had no thought except to exterminate the insurgents. The slightest error on Makhno's part would inevitably have meant the same fate for the Insurrectionary Army. Even the women who supported that army, or fought alongside the men, would not have been spared. The Makhnovists were experienced enough to know that." Makhno wasted no time in returning eastwards. Soon, he had control of the whole of the Central Ukraine. And in October, his black flag flew over the city of Ekaterinoslav.

Denikin was forced to abandon his march on Moscow. In November, however, Makhno had to give up Ekaterinoslav and regroup again in the south. But he contineud to harass Denikin. Moreover, the Red Army was once again becoming active, coming down from the north. Denikin's army was almost finished. Makhno and the Insurgent Army had won . . . but peace did not come to the Ukraine. The Communists had old scores to settle. "The Bolsheviks, saved indirectly by the revolutionary partisans, returned to the Ukraine to harvest the laurels they had not won", remarked Voline dryly.

The Reds Return

A number of divisions of the Red Army arrived in the city of Alexdrovsk at the end of December 1919, whilst Makhno's general staff were there. The ordinary troops of the Red Army readily fraternised with Makhno's partisans. But a week later, the Military Council of the 14th Corps of the Red Army ordered Makhno and the Insurrectionary Army to move to the Polish border. Makhno, naturally, refused – as the Reds had expected. Moreover, Makhno called on the soldiers of the Red Army to repudiate their leadership. He then broke camp, and the Insurrectionary Army set out for their home base of Gulai-Polya, which was now free of both White and Red forces.

Makhno, however, was not left alone by the Communists, although the district of Gulai-Polya was able to start, yet again, a certain amount of positive anarchist and libertarian activity. Local non-Party Soviets started up, and schools based on free, non-authoritarian principles began to function – until the Bolsheviks unleashed their unprecedented violence and repression throughout the whole of the Ukraine at the end of November 1920.

Between January and November, the Bolsheviks did not openly attempt to crush the Insurrectionary Army, but they did attack many defenceless villages in the Ukraine. "Mass arrests and executions soon began, and the Denikinist repression paled beside that of the Bolsheviks," said Voline. Moreover Makhno was sick and often unconscious during this period. More than once he almost fell into Communist hands. "All through the year of 1920 and even later," wrote Peter Archinov in his memoirs, "the Soviet authorities carried on the fight against the Makhnovists, pretending to be fighting banditry. They engaged in intense agitation to persuade the country of this, using their press and all their means of propaganda to uphold the slander both within and outside Russia."

However, during the summer the Whites, this time under the command of Baron Wrangel, swept up again from the South. In September, Makhno was forced to give up Alexandrovsk, Sinelnikovo and even Gulai-Polya to the Whites. Then, in the middle of October, the Insurrectionary Army set out to attack Wrangel's forces. Within three weeks the whole of the region was cleared of Wrangel. He withdrew to the Crimea with Makhno – and later the Red Army – in hot pursuit. At the same time another Anarchist-Makhnovist army moved towards Simeferopol. And that was the end of Baron Wrangel. The remnants of his troops sailed from the Crimea for exile abroad.

Now the Communists were able to concentrate all their activity and resources against Makhno and the anarchists. Throughout Russia and the Ukraine, anarchists, libertarian socialists and members of the Social Revolutionary Party were being hunted, jailed and executed by the Bolshevik *Cheka* and Trotsky's Red Army. On November 26, Gulai-Polya was surrounded by Red troops. Makhno and about 250 horsemen were there at the time (now that the Whites had been driven out many of Makhno's partisans returned to their work on the land). With these few comrades, Makhno, who was still sick and had also been wounded, counter-attacked. He routed the Reds and was able to escape. Soon, many of his former insurgents returned, and he was able to go on to the offensive against the Communist forces. Eight days later he was back in his native Gulai-Polya. But the Communists began to bring in more and more divisions against Makhno. Once again, the Makhnovists had to flee from their native land. Pursued by thousands of Red troops, the dwindling partisans fought running battles near Kiev, then Kursk, then towards Kharkov and finally across the Don. Of the situation, Makhno wrote afterwards:

"At the beginning of August, 1921, it was decided that, in view of the severity of my wounds, I would leave for abr ad . . . On August 22, a bullet struck me in the neck and came out of the right cheek. Once again I was lying at the bottom of a cart. On the 26th, we were obliged to fight a new battle eith the Reds . . . and on August 28, I crossed the Dniester. Here I am abroad . . ."

Following Makhno's escape abroad, the Communists soon wiped out the remaining Makhnovists. The now almost defunct Petlurists were also rounded up. Soon, the Communists controlled all of Russia and the Ukraine, and were able to set up their State-capitalist dictatorship under Lenin, Trotsky and later Stalin.

The Man Makhno

Makhno was no intellectual, although he respected those of his comrades, like Peter Archinov, who were well-read. If there is such a thing as a 'born rebel', then Nestor Makhno was one. As a young man in jail he was stubborn and always insubordinate to the prison authorities. He was, at least in theory, an internationalist; but was rather like a fish out of water away from his own homeland in the Ukraine.

But Makhno will always be remembered as a guerrilla 'leader'. He was very courageous and extremely resourceful in the 'arts' of guerrilla warfare. He was capable of instantaneous decisions. He had, said Victor Serge, "a truly epic capacity for organisation and combat". He was, claimed Voline, a military

genius. Indeed, many years after, Alexander Berkman in a fit of temper, accused him of having a militarist temperament. Makhno was a libertarian, an anarchist; but as time went by the terrible pressures and tribulations of, first, years in prison and then of the civil war, affected him both physically and psychologically. He suffered from TB and was wounded many times during the fighting.

For most of the time he was commander-in-chief of the Insurrectionary Army, Makhno used all his efforts to avoid any kind of regimentation. Although his 'key' officers were appointed by him personally, all the other commanders were elected by the partisans themselves. Indeed, the Insurrectionary Army never lost its plebian character. Unlike the Red Army of Leon Trotsky, not one of its commanders came from the nobility or upper classes. All its officers were peasants or factory workers. Many of the partisans were Jews; and Makhno personally condemned anti-semitism. But as time went by, he did become increasingly authoritarian. And he began to drink too much. Of him, Peter Archinov said:

"Makhno's personality contained many superior characteristics – spirit, will, hardihood, energy and activity. The traits, taken together, created an imposing impression, and made him remarkable even among revolutionists. At the same time he lacked the theoretical knowledge needed to understand politics and history. That is why he frequently could not reach the necessary revolutionary generalisations and conclusions – or did not even perceive their necessity."

His greatest fault, according to Voline, was his addiction to alcohol. He often became drunk, and later in life was an alcoholic. He was also accused by his more 'moral' comrades of being licentious and, on occasions, participating in 'orgies' with members of the opposite sex! (the attitude towards such matters, even among anarchists, was a lot different 50 years ago). The inevitable result of these aberrations, says Voline, was an excess of 'warrior sentiment'. But considering the circumstances and the fact that many non-anarchist peasants virtually worshipped him as Bat'ko, the 'little father', this wasn't really surprising. What was surprising was that he retained any libertarian ideas or attitudes at all.

In August 1921, Makhno crossed into Romania. He was promptly interned, but soon escaped to Poland. There he was arrested for supposed crimes committed against the Poles, but was acquitted. He then went to Danzig and was, once again, imprisoned. He managed to escape from there and, with the help of a few comrades, made his way to France. He finally settled in Paris. He worked long hours for a 'dog's wage' in a local factory. His wife also had to go out to work to supplement his meagre wages, despite the fact that she had a baby daughter. But he did engage in some anarchist activity during this period. In 1927, he became friendly with a young exiled Spanish anarchist by the name of Buenaventura Durruti – who, less than ten years later, was to become as well-known in Spain as Makhno had become in the Ukraine.

In July 1935, Nestor Makhno died in Tenon Hospital in Paris. Commented George Woodcock: "He never surrendered".

Buenaventura Durruti

It has often been said, remarked John Hewetson in *War Commentary for Anarchism*, four years after the end of the Spanish Civil War, that the Spanish Revolution of 1936 threw up into prominence no 'world figures' comparable with Lenin and Trotsky in the Russian Revolution. But, says Hewetson, an exception must be made in the case of the anarchist Durruti. He symbolised in his person the struggle of the revolutionary workers and peasants of Spain.

Buenaventura Durruti was born on July 14th 1896 in Leon, a mountainous area in central northern Spain. More prosperous than the south, but far less industrialised than Catalonia, it was not, and never has been, an anarchist stronghold like Catalonia or Andalusia. Buenaventura was one of nine brothers (one was killed in the October 1934 uprising in the Asturias, another died fighting the Fascists on the Madrid front and all the others were murdered by the Fascists). His father was a railway worker in the yard at Leon who described himself as a libertarian socialist.

Durruti had black, straight hair, brown eyes, and was rather stocky and very strong. He did not, however, care for the rough games at school. He left school at fourteen and went to work as a trainee mechanic, like his father, in the railway yard in the city of Leon. He was still working in the yard in 1917 when the 'socialist' controlled Union General de Trabajadores (UGT) called an official strike of the Northern Railway Workers. Durruti took an active and prominent part in the strike which, after the government had refused to accept the terms agreed between the employers and the Union, became a general strike throughout the area. The general strike, which began on August 10th, was crushed in three days. The Spanish Government brought in the

Army, which behaved with extreme barbarity. They killed 70 and wounded over 500 workers. Moreover, the authorities also jailed 2,000 of the strikers. The Army had, in the words of one observer, 'saved the nation'. Durruti managed to escape, but had to flee abroad to France. The brutality of the Spanish State had a profound and lasting effect on the young Durruti.

From the fall of 1917 until the beginning of 1920, Durruti worked in Paris as a mechanic. He then decided to return to Spain and arrived at San Sebastian just across the border. Here, he was introduced to the local anarchist group. Shortly after Buenasca, the then President of the recently-formed anarchist-controlled Confederacion Nacional del Trabajo (CNT), persuaded him to go to Barcelona where the anarchist movement, as well as the syndicalists, was being brutally suppressed and most of its members jailed or executed. For some time there had been considerable unrest in Barcelona and throughout Catalonia.

The Terror

In February 1919, the workers of a large electrical factory known as the Canadiense went on strike in support of seven of their workmates who had been dismissed for political reasons, and for an increase in wages for certain categories of workers in the plant. The strike was well organised, this being an important test case for the CNT. The English manager was prepared to compromise – particularly as wages at the factory were below average; but on advice from the local Captain-general, he changed his mind and refused to discuss the stoppage with the Union. Moreover, the Captain-genreral jailed the officials of the CNT and declared martial law, although as Gerald Brenan noted, the strike was perfectly peaceful and 'legal'. Following the refusal of the Barcelona authorities to release the organisers, a general strike throughout the Barcelona area began. It lasted a fortnight and involved over 100,000 workers. The outcome was inconclusive. "However", remarks Brenan, "the military arrested many thousands of workmen and in the usual Spanish style, gave sentences of imprisonment amounting to seventeen hundred years – sentences which of course would not be carried out".

The state's terror against the workers, the CNT and the anarchist movement had begun in earnest. Driven to desperation by the extreme repression, anarchists such as Durruti and his friend Francisco Ascaso, a bakery worker from Catalonia, met violence with violence, assassination with assassination. Between 1919 and 1922, almost every well-known anarchist or syndicalist was either murdered by pistoleros hired by the employers' federation, or were shot 'trying to escape' from jail – the so-called ley de fugas. Indeed, says Hugh Thomas in his book *The Spanish Civil War*, "a new civil governor, Martinez Anido, and a police chief, Arlegui, fought the anarchists with every weapon they could, including the foundation of a rival, government-favoured Union, the Sindicato Libre, and a special constabulary, the Somaten". One of the most respected anarchists in the country, the CNT President Salvator Sequi, was shot down in the street by a police gunman.

The main instrument in bringing about the repression and terror was the government of Dato which began in 1920. Ascaso and Durruti decided to assassinate him. He was indeed killed in Madrid in 1921 by, it has been said, anarchists – but not by Ascaso or Durruti. However, a far more sinister figure was near at hand – Cardinal Soldevila of Saragossa. Mention has already been made of the Sindicato Libre, or 'yellow Unions' as the anarchists called

them. These yellow Unions were mainly financed and supported by this so-called Man of God. Moreover, Soldevila was extremely wealthy, deriving his fortune from various hotels, casinos and lesser gambling houses. In fact, he was one of the largest shareholders in the biggest gaming establishments. He hated both the anarchists and the CNT and supported their suppression. In 1923, Ascaso and Durruti decided to kill him. And they were successful. In the words of H Rudiger: "Ascaso and Durruti made an end of this so-called Holy Man, who in the name of one who had driven the money-changers from the temple, did not hesitate to act as one himself, and to use his ill-gotten wealth to crush the efforts of the workers for more humane social conditions".

Durruti did not take this action lightly. Moreover, as George Woodcock has observed, the basic doctrines of anarchism deny retribution and punishment; they are unanarchistic. But, he says, they were typical of Spain at the time. No anarchist favours violence for violence's sake; but anarchists such as Ascaso and Durruti could see no alternative at that time – except passive acceptance of dictatorship, repression and state violence. And no anarchist would accept that!

The dictatorship of Primo de Rivera, which began in 1923, saw the virtual eclipse of militant anarchist activity in Spain. Anarchist newspapers were banned and all prominent anarchists were either in jail or exile or had been shot. Both Ascaso and Durruti had to flee the country.

Durruti Abroad

Ascaso and Durruti went first to Argentina, here they were received with tremendous enthusiasm by large numbers of workers. However, almost immediately, the police began to hound them. They were driven out of the Argentine. The Spanish authorities had obviously warned all South and Central American Governments in advance. Throughout Latin America, Ascaso and Durruti were given no peace. Often starving, they were hounded from Chile, then Uruguay and Mexico. The Argentine Government condemned them to death as anarchist agitators. Indeed, even the Stalinist hack, Ilya Ehrenburg, later remarked with pride that four capitalist States had condemned Durruti to death.

Whilst Durruti was in South America, numbers of anarchist militants gathered in France and, according to Thomas, directed occasional forays across the border into Spain. In this activity they were, of course, supported by French anarchists. Ascaso and Durruti, therefore, decided to make their way to France, particularly as Durruti knew Paris well. They settled in Paris and Durruti opened a bookshop. And it was there that he first met Nestor Makhno.

Some months later in 1924, the notorious arch-reactionary King Alfonso XIII of Spain visited Paris. Ascaso and Durruti attempted to assassinate him, but were unsuccessful. They were caught and arrested. Both were jailed for a year. On their releasr, Argentina demanded their extradition so that the sentence of death that awaited them could be carried out. However, the French anarchist movement inaugurated a tremendous libertarian campaign on their behalf, and succeeded in frustrating the Argentine authorities. Finally on June 19th 1925, they were released from jail in France, but had to leave the country within two weeks. Belgium and Luxemburg refused them political asaylum; so they went to Germany, which at the time was governed by a

Social Democrat (Labour) Government. But the Social Democrats also refused them entry.

Ascaso and Durruti then returned to France illegally. Again, they lived under cover in Paris. But they were not happy living on the charity and solidarity of their French comrades. They wanted to work and earn their own living. So they decided to make their way to Lyon. They both found jobs at Lyon, but were soon discovered by the police – and were sentenced to six months in jail. After that they lived, again illegally, for a time in Belgium. In 1927, Durruti made his way to Berlin to the home of the well-known German anarchist, Augustin Souchy. But the Germans would not let him stay. At last, however, the Belgian Government had a change of heart. The Belgian police granted both Ascaso and Durruti permits to stay there.

During all this time of wandering from country to country, Durruti took part in various anarchist activities, and kept in touch with a number of his comrades in Spain itself. During this period, moreover, the Soviet authorities, sensing Durruti's potential influence in Spain at a later date, offered him and Ascaso refuge in the USSR. But they refused to entertain the idea of going to Russia. Makhno, if no one else, would have warned them against accepting Communist 'hospitality'.

Fall of the Monarchy

In July 1927 at a secret meeting in Valencia, anarchist delegates from all over Spain came together to form the Federacion Anarquista Iberica (the FAI) in order to co-ordinate the efforts and activities of all the various groups and federations of anarchists throughout Spain.

With the fall of the Spanish monarchy in April 1931, Ascaso and Durruti returned to Spain. On arrival they found that certain 'leaders' of the CNT had become increasingly reformist during the period of the Dictatorship, whilst the FAI and most of the rank-and-file members and activists of the CNT remained true to their anarchist principles. In May, a motley collection of liberal-republicans, radicals and 'socialists' were returned to Parliament (the Cortes) in what has been described as the fairest election in Spain's history. Angel Pestana, a leading reformist, argued that the CNT should support the Republican Government. Durruti opposed him. And Durruti, the FAI and the majority of the CNT were soon proved correct.

A Congress of the CNT met in Madrid in July, its object being to reorganise the movement and prepare for future battles. Almost immediately, there was a strike of building workers in Barcelona; many of the strikers were gunned down by the Guardia de Asalto. Then, the telephone operators struck at the Central Telephone Exchange and were locked out of the building. A week later a strike in Seville led to troops killing 30 strikers and wounding 300. Three workers were also shot dead by the military in San Sebastian. So much for the 'liberal', 'radical', republican Government of Azana! "The Government", observed Brenan in *The Spanish Labyrinth*, "showed that they had no hesitation in employing all the means that they had so much condemned when practised by the reactionary governments of the past". Of course! The 'socialist'-controlled UGT, though not supporting the workers in their struggles against the employers and the State, were becoming less influential, whilst the newly-organised CNT were becoming stronger all the time. Indeed, the workers just had to fight back as their standard of living – always very low by European standards – had fallen considerably, and unemployment was

increasing. During this period a number of FAI activists, including Ascaso and Durruti, made raids on banks in order to get money for the workers and the movement. Durruti is particularly remembered for his celebrated assault on the Bank of Spain at Gijon. He never kept a centimo for himself. He was now married and his wife was expecting.

In January 1932, the Catalan FAI Federation, which had now adopted Communismo Libertarie (Libertarian Communism), together with the new neo-Trotskyist Left Communist Party of Maurine, Nin and Andrade, organised an insurrection throughout Catalonia. The Army soon suppressed the uprising and about 120 prominent anarchists and Left Communists were arrested and deported to Spanish Guinea without trial. Ascaso and Durruti were among them. Durruti's baby was just two months old. For three months the Government kept him in prison in Guinea, but after considerable agitation for his and his comrades' release, they were set free. He returned to Spain on April 15th.

After his return to Spain, things were somewhat quieter for Durruti. It appears that he tried to settle down; but between 1933 and 1935, the two 'black years' as they were called, the reactionary republican Government of Lerroux-Robles made Durruti the object of continual persecution. He was continually hounded by the police. For some while, hw worked in a factory in Barcelona and joined the Textile Workers' Syndicate. He spoke at public meetings and took part in organisational work on behalf of the union and the anarchist movement generally. But again and again he was taken into custody by the police and held without any charges being made against him.

During this period Spain was in a state of near-chaos and in October 1934 there were risings in Barcelona, Madrid and the Asturias. These risings were mainly led by Catalan nationalists, supported by 'socialists' and the numerically-weak Communist Party. Except in the Asturias, they were not well organised. The CNT and FAI stood aloof, except in the Asturias. Here the anarchists, 'socialists', Stalinists and the neo-Trotskyists worked together. Moreover, many of the workers attacked their old enemy, the Catholic Church, and convents and some churches were burned down; a few nuns said they had been raped and the Bishop's Palace and much of the University of Oviedo was destroyed. Several unpopular priests were shot. However, the Government called on General Franco to put the rising down. There then followed a terrible retribution. The army killed 1,300 workers, mostly miners, and wounded 3,000. During October and November of 1934 the Government jailed over 30,000 workers for political offences alone, the majority of these from the Asturias. In 1934, moreover, a typical Fascist Party began to take form and become active. It was called the Falange, and was made up largely of young, dissatisfied sons of the rich. Its funds came from businessmen and from the aristocracy.

Such was the state of Spain before the rising of the generals in 1936, the revolution and the subsequent civil war. In the middle of July, Durruti entered hospital for a hernia operation.

Revolution and Civil War

In February 1936 a Popular Front (the Stalinists, Harry Gannes and Theodore Repard, in their book *Spain in Revolt* call it a 'People's Front') Government of various sorts of Republicans and 'socialists' came to power. There were no Communists in the Government or Communist sympathisers; indeed, the

Stalinists only won 14 seats out of a total of 470, and their membership was probably under 3,000 or about a tenth of that of the FAI. Whatever else it was, the militarist-Falangist uprising was not an attack on Stalinism.

On July 11th, a group of Falangists seized the broadcasting station at Valencia and issued a proclamation stating: "This is Radio Valencia! The Spanish Falange has seized the broadcasting station by force of arms; tomorrow the same will happen at broadcasting stations throughout Spain!" This was only a beginning. At five o'clock in the afternoon of July 17th, General Franco assumed command of the Moors and Legionaires of Spanish Morocco, and issued a manifesto to the Army and the nation to join him in establishing an Authoritarian State in Spain. In the next three days, all of the fifty Army garrisons, with the support of the Falange, the majority of the landlords, aristocracy, big bourgeoisie and, of course, the Catholic Church (itself a wealthy institution), declared for Fascism. War had been declared on the peasants and workers of Spain. And they took up the challenge.

In Barcelona the militarist rising took place on July 19th. Hearing of the uprising, Durruti — whose wound was still open — immediately left the hospital and joined the workers on the barricades. During the evening of the 18th both anarchists and 'Trotskyists' raided rifles and dynamite. They also commandeered as many vehicles as they could lay hands on. On July 20th both Ascaso and Durruti took part in an anarchist assault on the Ataranzaras Barracks. The pro-Fascist forces, after considerable and prolonged firing, surrendered at half-past one in the afternoon; but not before Durruti's friend and comrade Ascaso had been killed. Following the assault on the barracks the anarchist workers attacked the Fascist-held Hotel Colon. The seige lasted thirty-six hours, during which every one of the windows had concealed a rifle or machine gun and had been raining bullets on hundreds of almost unarmed workers in the surrounding streets. Durruti was among the first few to enter the building. By the evening of the 20th, the rising in Barcelona had been completley crushed. But not elsewhere in Spain.

The following day, President Companys was visited by Garcia Oliver and Durruti. "These formidable men of violence", says Hugh Thomas, "sat before Companys with their rifles between their knees, their clothes still dusty from the fight, their hearts heavy at the death of Ascaso". Companys then made a very skilful, typical politician's speech, admitting that the CNT and the anarchists had never been "accorded their proper treatment", but that the anarchists were now "masters of the city". He appealed to them to accept him as leader of the Catalan Government. Garcia Oliver fell for the 'soft-soap'. He became the world's first (and, it is hoped, last) anarchist Minister of Justice! However, Durruti had far more important things to do.

The Catalan workers set up an 'Anti-Fascist Militia's Committee', comprising representatives of the CNT, the FAI, the UGI, the neo-Trotskyists and a number of republican groups. This committee, according to Thomas, was the real 'government' of Barcelona, and indeed the whole of Catalonia. It was, says Thomas, dominated by its anarchist representatives — Oliver, Durruti and Ascaso's brother, Joaquin.

A week later, the committee delegated Durruti to organise an Anti-Fascist Militia. He formed the now-famous 'Durruti Column'.

Aragon and Anarchism

On July 23rd two columns set out from Barcelona to liberate Saragossa on the Aragon front. The first column was composed almost entirely of anarchist militiamen, and was over 1,000 strong. Its number soon increased to between 8,000 and 10,000. It was by far the largest and strongest unit on the anti-Fascist side. They were all volunteers and mostly anarchists, anarchist sympathisers and members of the CNT.

By the beginning of August, Durruti's column was within sight of Saragossa. But a certain Colonel Villalba, Commander of the Barbastro garrison and now in 'official' but rather vague command of the republican forces on the Aragon front, persuaded Durruti to halt his column for fear of being cut off from the other columns. Durruti agreed; but later continued his attack on the city. During the assault the cathedral was burnt to the ground. Durruti never made any secret of his aims. Indeed, he is alleged to have remarked to a Russian reporter just before the assault on the city:

"It is possible that only a hundred of us will survive, but with that hundred we shall enter Saragossa, beat Fascism and proclaim libertarian communism. I will be the first to enter. We shall proclaim the free commune. We shall subordinate ourselves neither to Madrid nor Barcelona, neither to Azana nor Companys. . . . We shall show you Bolsheviks how to make a revolution."

Saragossa was captured and Aargon freed from Fascist control. Moreover, in the words of Hewetson, Durruti "laid the foundations of the great advance into Aragon, which established the front and safeguarded the revolutionary peasant collectives on which the food supply of Catalonia depended". And Souchy observed that "Wherever his column advanced, they socialised, they collectivised, they prepared everything for free socialism". Felix Morrow in his *Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Spain*, noted that "At least three-fourths of the land was tilled by collectives. Peasants desiring to work the land individually were permitted to do so, provided they employed no hired labour. . . . Agricultural production increased in the region from thirty to fifty per cent over the previous year, as a result of collective labour. Enormous surpluses were voluntarily turned over to the government, free of charge, for use at the front". "Altogether", writes Thomas, "there were 450 collectives".

Morrow says that many workers from abroad saw Aragon and praised it. Not only that but anarchism, Communismo Libertarie, was also more efficient!

Of the situation, Thomas (not always an impartial writer) comments: "It was the presence of Durruti and the other powerful CNT-FAI columns in Aragon which made possible the establishment in that region at least of a purely Anarchist authority (sic!). This was a most disturbing event from the point of view of the Central Government, the Catalan Government, the Communists, and indeed all groups apart from the CNT and FAI themselves. But there was nothing that they could do about it . . ." The anarchists and peasants "set up a regional 'Council of Defence', composed entirely of CNT members and presided over by Joaquin Ascaso, brother of Durruti's famous companion killed in July. This had its seat at Fraga, and from thence exercised supreme power over the whole of Aragon. Deriving power directly from the collectives, this was now the sole real revolutionary power in Spain."

In September, after the liberation of Aragon from Franco's forces, Durruti was interviewed by Pierre van Paasen of the Toronto *Star*. In this interview he gives his views on Fascism, government and social revolution. Despite the fact that his remarks have only been reported in English – and were never

actually written down by him in his native Spanish – they are worth repeating here.

"For us", said Durruti, "it is a matter of crushing Fascism once and for all. Yes; and in spite of the Government".

"No government in the world fights Fascism to the death. When the bourgeoisie sees power slipping from its grasp, it has recourse to Fascism to maintain itself. The Liberal Government of Spain could have rendered the Fascist elements powerless long ago. Instead it compromised and dallied. Even now at this moment, there are men in this Government who want to go easy on the rebels."

And here Durruti laughed. "You can never tell, you know, the present Government might yet need these rebellious forces to crush the workers' movement . . ."

"We know what we want. To us it means nothing that there is a Soviet Union somewhere in the world, for the sake of whose peace and tranquillity the workers of Germany and China were sacrificed to Fascist barbarians by Stalin. We want revolution here in Spain, right now, not maybe after the next European war. We are giving Hitler and Mussolini far more worry with our revolution than the whole Red Army of Russia. We are setting an example to the German and Italian working class on how to deal with Fascism."

"I do not expect any help for a libertarian revolution from any Government in the world. . . . We expect no help, not even from our own Government, in the last analysis."

"But", interjected van Paasen, "You will be sitting on a pile of ruins."

Durruti answered: "We have always lived in slums and holes in the wall. We will know how to accomodate ourselves for a time. For, you must not forget, we can also build. It is we the workers who built these palaces and cities here in Spain and in America and everywhere. We, the workers, can build others to take their place. And better ones! We are not in the least afraid of ruins. We are going to inherit the earth; there is not the slightest doubt about that. The bourgeoisie might blast and ruin its own world before it leaves the stage of history. We carry a new world here, in our hearts. That world is growing this minute."

Madrid – the End

At the beginning of November 1936, Franco's four armies, made up mostly of Moroccans and Legionaires, converged on Madrid. The battle began on November 8th. It was basically a struggle between a well-equipped army supported by German and Italian bombers on one side, and an ill-armed mass of urban workers on the other. There were many women fighting on the republican side. Moreover, in Madrid the Communists were relatively stronger and better organised; they were also supported by various International Brigades.

The battle continued unabated. Franco said that he would rather destroy Madrid completely than leave it to the Marxists. German Nazi troops of the Condor Legion planned to set the city on fire, quarter by quarter. From November 16th onwards Madrid was bombed by German planes day and night. In three nights alone over 1,000 people were killed by the bombs. Furthermore, Madrid was cut off from the rest of Spain.

In this situation of desperate crisis, Durruti decided to move 4,000 members of his Column from Aragon across the country to help relieve Madrid. His arrival had a tremendous effect on the beseiged workers of the city. It saved Madrid, at least for a while. But on November 20th, just as he was getting out of a car, a stray bullet hit him in the back of the head, and he died immediately. On November 22nd his body was brought back to Barcelona, accompanied by a number of his closest comrades. It lay in state until the following morning. Thousands filed past the open coffin. Karrill describes the funeral thus:

"It had been arranged for 10 o'clock, but hours before it was impossible to enter the Via Layetana . . . from all directions groups with banners and wreaths arrived. All Barcelona was out to pay their last tribute to their hero. Many groups carried banners with inscriptions. The words 'We shall avenge him' were repeated over and over again. Immense masses of people streamed into the square outside the house of the Regional Committee, when Durruti's comrades carried the coffin out on their shoulders. Armed militiamen accompanied them. The band played the anarchist 'hymn': 'Sons of the People'. And tens of thousands raised their fists in salute." Many important dignitaries were, of course, present, including the 'anarchist' Minister of Justice, Garcia Oliver, and the Russian Consul who said he was deeply moved (!). Over 500,000 people attended Durruti's funeral. Thousands of banners and black and black and red flags flew in Barcelona that day.

What sort of a man was Durruti?

Brenan says that both Ascaso and Durruti were fanatics who, through their feats of daring, made themselves the heroes of the Catalan proletariat; they were the 'saints of the anarchist cause', showing the way by their example. Thomas says that, for some, Durruti was a 'thug', a 'killer' and a 'hooligan'; for others he was the indomitable hero, with a fine "imperious head eclipsing all others, who laughed like a child and wept before human tragedy". George Woodcock calls him "the celebrated guerrilla leader" and an idealist. Vernon Richards also refers to him as a geurrilla 'leader', but not the kind to 'direct' the masses.

Frederica Montseny said that Durruti was a kind man, with a "Herculean body, the eyes of a child in a half-savage face". He was a man of the people who did not impose himself on others. Liberto Callejas has spoken of his idealism, of his perseverance and his firmness. "Above all, Durruti was a proletarian anarchist", who moulded himself on the teachings of the anarchist Anselmo Lorenzo. Durruti, he said, was a propagandist who preferred simple words. He insisted on clearness. When he spoke on a platform, his audience well understood what he said. And like Makhno, Durruti was often gay. Emma Goldman, when she met him during the fighting, said that she found him "a veritable beehive of activity".

Durruti's Column, like Makhno's partisan army, was completely plebian in character. One of his comrades wrote of the Column: "The Column is neither militarily or bureaucratically organised. It has grown organically. It is a social revolutionary movement. We represent a union of oppressed proletarians, fighting for freedom for all. The Column is the work of Durruti, who determined its spirit and defended its libertarian principles until his last breath. The foundation of the Column is voluntary self-discipline. And the end of its activity is nothing else than libertarian communism". Moreover, Durruti also ate and slept with everyone else; and when there was a shortage

of anything, such as matresses or shoes, he went without the same as everybody else.

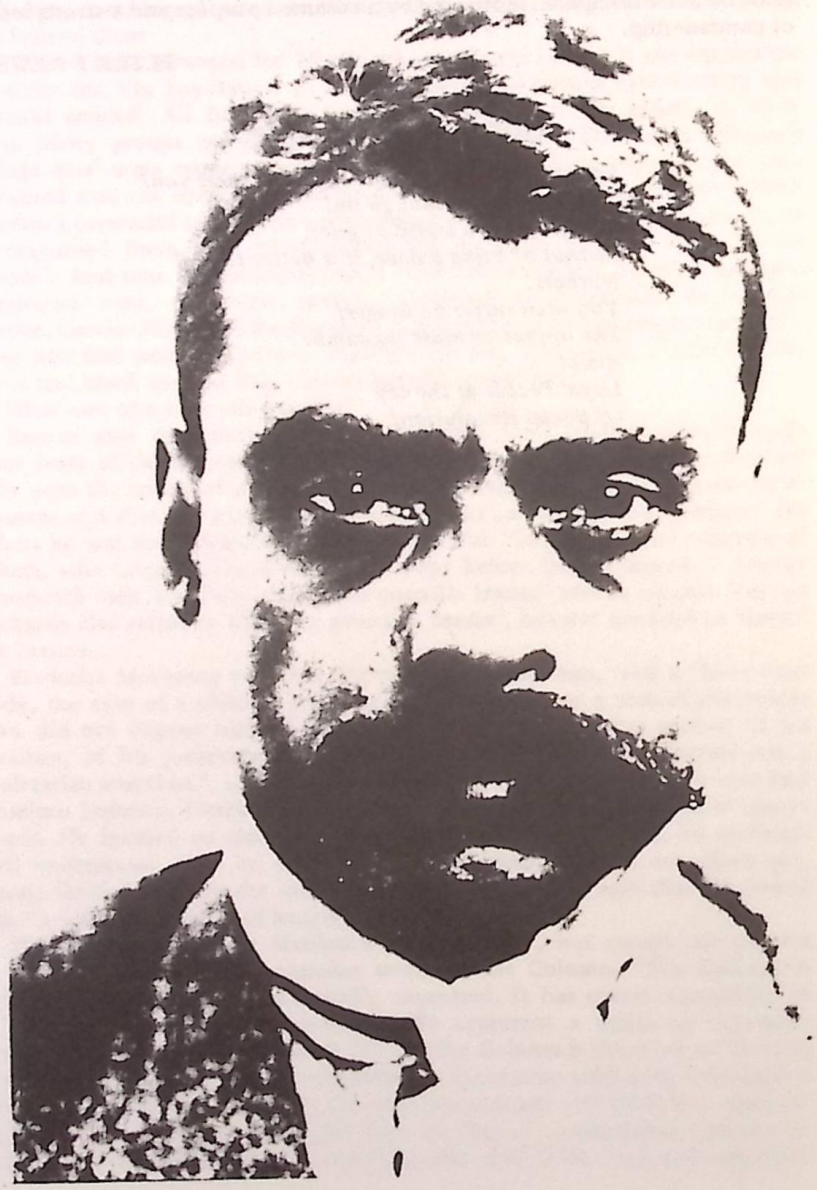
Of himself, Durruti said to Emma Goldman:

"I have been an anarchist all my life. I hope I have remained one. I should consider it very sad indeed had I to turn to a General and rule men with a military rod. . . . I believe, as I always have, in freedom. The freedom which rests on the sense of responsibility. I consider discipline indispensible, but it must be inner discipline, motivated by a common purpose and a strong feeling of comradeship.

PETER E NEWELL

Sons of the People

Sons of the people, your chains oppress you!
This injustice cannot go on!
If your life is a world of grief,
Instead of being a slave, it is better to die!
Workers!
You shall suffer no longer!
The oppressor must succumb!
Arise!
Loyal People at the cry
Of Social Revolution!



Emiliano Zapata

Emiliano Zapata was born in the hamlet of San Miguel Anenecuilo, near the village of Ayala in the state of Morelos at the time when Don Porfirio Diaz was the self-elected ruler of Mexico.

The village lay near the Hacienda of Chinameca where powerful landowners lived. Every year this Hacienda swallowed up a little more of the common lands that the villagers had held ever since anyone could remember, the common lands on which the common people, Indians like Emiliano, grew their crops.

The land was good land, rich land, and the sugar planters needed it to grow their crops too. There was water there and sugar needed plenty of water, so it was necessary to get the Indians off. Not all at once, but a little at a time, so that they wouldn't notice it quite so much.

When this was accomplished the Indian would have no land, no work no food for his wife and children. But the rich landowners could find him plenty of work on their plantations. Wages? Well, as there wasn't any other work the Indian would be glad to have a job at all. So he would work just for his keep, but not too much keep, or he would get lazy and not work as hard as he should. The Indian would never work for the sugar planter if he had his own land so they stole his land and shot him if he protested, and that, as they say, was that.

After a time all of the land in Morelas was owned by eleven very rich families, most of whom lived in Mexico City. The simple country people, believing in justice (for had they not had a revolution in the days of Benito Juarez for land and freedom?) decided to send a delegation to the big city to

see Don Porfirio (who was himself an Indian and had fought with Juarez the great liberator). He would understand their problems and the law would make the rich men give back the land that they had stolen.

But when they arrived at the Presidential Palace, who should be there with Don Porfirio? Why, those very rich men who had stolen the land. The villagers told Don Porfirio of their problem and he listened intently. Then he told them that he would see about it. They must go back to their village and the law would take its course, it would take time, but they must be patient. So they went back to the village and they waited and waited and waited, but nothing happened. After a very long wait they decided to hire lawyers and, though this was very expensive, they put what little they had together to pay the fees. The lawyers took their money, but they never got the land. All they got was promises. So the Indians were finally left with no land and no money and no one who would speak for them, and they went to work on the plantation for their keep.

Cutting sugar-cane is hard work and the hours were long, and the Indians were not helped by the fact that they were living on a starvation diet of tortillas and beans. The Indians tended to die prematurely and, when a man lay dying, he would tell his sons, "You must get the land back".

Young Emiliano probably started to work on the Hacienda too, but at an early age he and his brother Eufemio decided that this life was not for them. They stole guns and became highwaymen, spending their time relieving the rich of their valuables instead of adding to them.

In the year 1900 the two brothers were caught by the police. If this had not happened the story would have been quite different, they would probably have gone on being small-time criminals hunted by the police and being known to nobody. They were given a choice (justice was rough in those days) — join the army or be shot. They joined the army. They spent ten years in the Mexican army and then they were released by one of those mass let-outs they sometimes have in Latin countries to celebrate something or other.

Just after Emiliano came out of the army things began to happen on the political scene in Mexico. For the first time since Don Porfirio had come to power there were to be opposition parties at the elections. The liberals (who were very progressive in those days) put up a candidate in Morelos. But he didn't get in, in spite of the fact that most of the people had voted for him. Probably some of the votes got lost during the count. After the election those who had worked for the liberal had to leave town, as they say, in a hurry, and along with some others went the two brothers.

Francisco Madero

They went up into the hills, where they probably took to banditry again and, by 1911, when the real rising began, they had quite a large group under their command. This rising was led by one of the men from the big city, a lawyer, whose name was Francisco Madero.

In the film *Viva Zapata*, a very good point was brought out about Madero. An emissary came from him looking for Zapata, and he told the two brothers that he had come from Francisco Madero, the 'leader' of the revolution, who is in Texas. Eufemio says, "What is he doing in Texas? The revolution is here". This was the situation in those days, the poor did the fighting and the rich did the talking (as is always the case). Francisco Madero was a good man, but a soft man. The fighting was done by the Zapatas, the Obregons and the Villas.

Madero arrived in triumph when it was all over.

Madero was of the upper class and did not understand the common people. He believed in things like the freedom of the press and democratic elections, but the people just wanted the land.

As Zapata once said, "What is the good of the press being free if the nation cannot read?" Madero had good intentions but he was of the city and therefore was a believer in the law. But the only law in Mexico was the law of the gun, and the Hacienda owners had private armies to enforce the law, and to see that the peasants obeyed it. He was a bungler, he had no luck, he was a man doomed to fail.

He was regarded at first as a Christ-like figure who had come to save the people from the slavery of the old regime. They flocked to his banner in their thousands and Don Porfirio saw that it was no use trying to fight. He left the country as fast as he could. He had little or no support. The men who had put him in power were dead and gone, and their sons were spending the money that their fathers' peons earned on French mistresses and gambling and could not be bothered to come back from abroad until it was too late.

General Zapata

By this time Zapata was in command of a large body of troops fighting in the army of Madero. He was, in fact, virtual leader of the army in the southern half of the country. His crack troops, known as the 'Death Legion', were quite well armed and mounted and were probably the best solidiers in the revolution. The banner they carried was of curious design, the virgin of Guadalupe mounted on a skull and cross-bones.

This army was already calling itself 'the Zapatistas', and one of its chief weapons was the stick of dynamite. This was lit by holding the bare fuse against a lighted cigar, the holder getting rid of it as soon as possible.

Zapata intended to take Don Porfirio before he could make good his escape, but the town of Cuaulta lay in his path, held by troops still loyal to the old regime. The city was taken by Zapata, but not before the old man had escaped. There is a description of the taking of the fortress in H D Dunn's book *The Crimson Jester*. ". . . Seven small boys, fourteen or fifteen years' old, loitered in the Plaza. Chasing each other they crossed this little park and began playing in the wide street in front of the barracks. All of them lighted black cigars from one match. They spread out, one remaining before the open door, three on each side running or playing leap-frog away from him. The guards watched idly. Suddenly the little fellows reached inside their ragged shirts, they withdrew small bright objects, like tin cans, with strings dangling from them. The boys touched the string to their lighted cigars and hurled them through the windows of the barracks. A section of the roof rose into the air. The great door leaned forwards, split down the middle and collapsed into the street. The two guards disappeared, one second they were there, the next they were gone in the space of a heartbeat. Fragments of other men came through the doorway, and at the same moment the 'Zapatistas' swept into the Plaza. Yelling, shooting, shouting, 'Viva Zapata' . . . 'Death to the whites' and other such things, they cut any of the garrison that attempted to fight, to shreds.

The commander of the garrison was shot on the spot and the soldiers were given the choice of joining the 'Zapatistas' or being shot. Most of them joined, the others were shot. After this, all the bankers and businessmen in

the town were shot and their money confiscated.

The policy of the 'Zapatistas' seemed to be one of Indian nationalism. If you were a foreigner they left you alone, unless you were a Spaniard, or of Spanish descent. If you were Spanish you were killed without mercy. The Indians had been treated by the Spaniards in virtually the same way as the Jews by Hitler. They had been a well-fed people (at least) before the Spaniards came. Now every part of the old way of life had gone and there was nothing but starvation in its place.

If people have their way of life destroyed they tend to get annoyed about it. These Indians had never heard of pacifism, they were very cruel, because they had been treated very creully. Exploiters who fell into their hands were often tortured in bestial ways, but to quote again from *The Crimson Jester*, "The Indians were not the kind of people to watch men suffer". Zapata would have some villain staked out on an ant hill, but no one waited to hear his screams. They just left him, forgot him. Perhaps they thought the punishment fitted the crime, who knows?

Land for the Indian

Before Madero became President, Zapata, with others, drew up a kind of charter. It called for the expulsion of the planters from Mexico and the return of the land to the Indian. When one says, 'The return of the land to the Indian', what does one mean? It could mean collectivism or communism, or again it could mean that the land should revert back to jungle and that no one should work the sugar plantations. These should disappear and a man would harvest his crops and move on to another place, as they had done before the white men came.

If this is what they wanted, and I rather fancy it was, they certainly got it. The large plantations were broken up or fell into disuse. Much of the land returned to the jungle where the Indian wandered free, living well sometimes and starving at others, like the old days.

Everyone signed the charter and it was taken to the big city and printed in the newspaper. Madero, who by this time was President, could now show that Zapata and his child-like Indian army were fools and could get on with the business of governing the country and getting back to normal; balancing the budget and so on. He had, in actual fact, simply taken the place of Don Porfirio without realising it. Of course things were better. There was freedom of speech, but the lawyers still ruled and the Hacienda owners settled down once again after the shouting had died down. Things must change so that they can remain the same.

The Indians soon began to realise that nothing had happened. Their charter had been printed in the paper, but no one had taken any further notice. There can be no doubt that as soon as Madero asked them to give up their weapons and disband, any trust they had in him melted away like butter in the sun.

The Indians were ignorant, illiterate, but they were not completely stupid. A mistake many people in this world is to trust in education. 'Education is what is wanted', we are told again and again, but if you are a crooked politician, you can tell people that you are taking their livelihood because they are standing in the way of progress. They must give up something for the good of the majority. An appeal is made to their patriotism and often they are suckers, but if you take a man's land who knows nothing about economics, he knows

that he wants it back and he will kill to get it back.

So this was the case in Mexico. The lawyers had taken the land and the Indians wanted it back. If they could plant their crops and harvest them it was their land and if they couldn't it was stolen from them. The Indian knew where his wealth lay, and he didn't need a politician or lawyer to tell him.

So when Madero came down to see Zapata and said that his army must disband and hand over their rifles so that the reconstruction could take place, a very cute trick was played on him by these child-like Indians. The Indians were to file past a reviewing stand, receive their twenty pesos and throw their rifles onto a heap.

As each man got his note he threw away his gun, an old and useless gun, strolled round the corner and down the street to a warehouse, where he picked up another old an useless gun and fell in line again to receive another twenty pesos and to throw that gun away too.

This was repeated until there were no more useless guns left. The men still had their arms and 60 pesos each. How they must have laughed over that.

Madero's Death

Madero must have been very afraid of Zapata at this time because he promised him the earth to disband his army. Emiliano was given the rank of General in the federal army. Each 'Zapatista' was to receive 20 pesos and his choice of land in Morelos or Guerrero as well as farming implements and animals. When the heat is on, a man will make many promises.

As Madero sought to pacify his old enemies in the ruling classes, the men who had fought for him became restless and scattered revolts kept breaking out again. Madero had been found wanting, and some of his best officers turned against him.

Three of these men joined the 'Zapatistas' and began training the men ready for battle. They had given Madero plenty of time to act, and he had sone nothing. The army of the south decided to raise the standard of revolt. Zapata himself voted against rebellion, but was outvoted by the others. He accepted the democratic principle.

Before this happened, however, Madero was already doomed. Taft was President of the United States of America and he had no time for Madero's liberalism. Things had been quieter in the old days under Don Porfirio and he didn't want a state of chaos over the border. So he placed an embargo on arms going into Mexico and thereby prevented Madero's loyal troops from putting down the revolts.

Suddenly Madero was arrested. Taking advantage of all the chaos in the country, the army staged a coup d'etat under the leadership of Victor Huerta.

On February 18th 1913, Lieutenant-Colonel Riverole went to the palace and presented the senate's demand that Madero should resign. Madero listened to him calmly, then, drawing a revolver, shot him dead. Another officer who rushed in was shot by his aide. Madero, like a man demented, rushed from the room shouting that he was the President and ran straight into the arms of soldiers who were on their way to arrest him. He was promptly disarmed and placed in a cell. Later, someone killed him.

So ended the life of a man who, a mere two years before, had been hailed as a Christ by the people of Mexico. When he had arrived in the big city people had run forward to kiss his hand. Now hardly anyone cared that he was dead.

Revolution Again

Victoriano Huerta was now in the saddle, but the horse was impossible to control. He probably wanted to get things back to the situation under Don Porfirio, a place for everyone and everyone in his place. Most soldiers like order; that is why they become soldiers, and he was no exception. He no doubt wanted to give Morelos back to the sugar planters and stabilise the economic life of the country, but he couldn't get off the ground, for he had too many enemies.

The trouble came from three main groups. Zapata in the south, Pancho Villa in the north, and Carranza. Zapata we have described as an Indian nationalist; Villa as a revolutionary of very doubtful type (he has been described as a madman, pervert Robin Hood, liar, sadist, bullying coward, simple and honest), he's very difficult to nail down; Carranza was just another politician, but more of a liar than most. His men called him the first chief and his enemies called him the first thief.

In the midst of this impossible chaos, Huerta gave up. He left by boat for Spain. He was placed under arrest six months later by the Americans for trying to lead an army over the border back into Mexico. By this time Carranza was the President, but the same state of chaos continued, with armies marching up and down the country looting and pillaging wherever they went. During the years from 1911-18, this became the way of life. Men fought for one side and then another, changing their coats as the political wind changed.

Zapata and Villa finally got together and drove Carranza from the Presidential Palace. There was very little fighting because 'the cockroaches', as Carranza's troops were called, simply fled at the approach of the two peasant armies. So Zapata and Villa met in the capital, shook hands and had their photographs taken. But Zapata did not like the capital and stayed outside in his armoured train most of the time. Villa on the other hand, now he had arrived, lived it up with his men.

While the revolutionaries were there they made rather a mess of the Country Club. They stabled their horses in the ballroom. They had, you see, no idea how the more polite section of society lived. They turned another great hpuse where they stayed into a midden, chopping great chunks out of the highly polished parquet floors. "We slipped walking across", they explained. They also used the library books for unmentionable purposes, but then they couldn't read them, could they?

The US Government began to put pressure on Carranza to try to do something to stop the chaos. He called a convention to settle the fate of the country, but tried to avoid having Zapata there. Villa, however, insisted that his old friend was allowed, and so the three factions all sent delegates.

Power

The convention gave the actual power to Zapata and Villa jointly, but of course the country was in a dreadful state and nothing could be done to end the chaos. All they could do was bring about a little order and fair play in Mexico City itself. You could only rule what you controlled in Mexico at that time.

Suddenly the position changed once again through the attitude north of the border. Villa was in control of the northern part of the country. Chihuahua was his state, and this bordered on the USA. Villa had promised the American

General Scott that he would pacify Mexico. Wilson lifted the arms embargo and supplies of arms (including some small field-pieces) flooded into the army of Pancho Villa.

Neither Zapata or Villa ever seemed to want to be the President of Mexico, but their man (Gutierez) certainly did.

After a time, however, he changed sides and became Carranza's man and the seemingly endless chaos started all over again. Carranza marched on Mexico City with thirty thousand men and Obregon, who had come to some agreement with him, with ten thousand. Villa retreated north and Zapata, left alone, had to pull out and go south. Carranza was back in the Palace. He sent Obregon north to do battle with Villa, and Zapata immediately returned and took some of the city back again. Driven off, he continued to fight a guerrilla war against the Government. By now, this had become a battle against the Government (whatever Government) because none of them gave land to the people.

This kind of tactic caused Carranza to call another convention (this time he excluded the 'Zapatistas') and another President was elected. This one didn't last very long. He quietly left one day taking a large amount of the funds with him.

Alone

Zapata suddenly attacked and captured Mexico City while most of Carranza's best troops were away looking for Villa. Very soon after this, these same troops, under Obregon, met and defeated Villa at the battle of Leon, scattering his army to the four winds.

Zapata was alone, but in the capital. He made a proclamation telling the poor to take whatever they wanted from those who had been keeping them in poverty. They took him at his word and the houses of the rich were sacked and burned. Churches were burned too. The gold in them was turned over to a kind of national pawnshop which lent money to those in need. Payments were made in gold for the first time in years.

Foreigners were protected, as was their property. Zapata became a great favourite with Americans living in the city because he protected them from excesses. When Carranza had been in the Palace, people had been shot in the street for the contents of their wallets, women were raped, it was bedlam. Now things were at least a little better. Zapata wanted the land, he may have been a bandit but he stood for something real.

Colonel Morales, who had been with Zapata a long time and was one of the ex-professional soldiers, told him to fall back from the capital. "Retreat", he said, "Villa is defeated and you cannot fight them all".

So Zapata's army fell back once again to its homeland in Morelos, leaving the capital to fall to the allies of Carranza.

Another peace conference was called and Emiliano was invited, but he declined. He had evidently come to the conclusion that all these conferences were was just an excuse for betrayal. He was quite right, because the defeated Pancho Villa's name was on the list calling for the conference. He had, for the moment at least, gone over to the other side. The conference had to be postponed this time, because Carranza could not be sure that things were safe. He didn't really have enough troops handy to be sure of holding Zapata.

When his allies had come back from up north it was a different story, and the 'Zapatistas' found themselves attacked from all sides. Obregon, having made a truce with Villa, had turned back south, and the 'cockroaches' were

coming from the east. Gonzalez, another general, had got round behind them. Morales and a body of men succeeded, in holding back the 'cockroaches' while the main body of the army fought its way out. As they succeeded in crushing Gonzalez, most of Morales' men got away too.

When they were safe for the moment, Zapata heard that he had been betrayed by one of his half-breed officers. He immediately reduced not only his half-breed officers to the ranks, but all the Indian ones that did not come from Morelos or Guerrero.

They set about strengthening their position in Morelos, as they were now on the defensive, waiting to be attacked. Shortly after this the 'Zapatistas' captured a money train (rather like the Great Train Robbers) and took millions in Carranza notes. They gave these to Indians who could take them into territory controlled by Carranza ar d spend them.

In spite of small successes such as this, Emiliano Zapata's back was to the wall. He still controlled Morelos, but his enemies were all about him. Morelos had been free since 1911, and the people of that state were willing to try to preserve that freedom, but the rest of the country wantedpeace. The 'Zapatistas' had driven out the parasites wherever they went, but they always came back, so what was the point?

The End

It was 1918, and General Gonzalez sent a force under the command of Colonal Jesus Guajardo to take a certain town near the 'Zapatistas' base. He sent a message to General Zapata telling him that he wished to come over and join his army. Emiliano smelled a rat, but the Colonel had been with Villa before he had been defeated by Obregon, so he might be all right. He may have done this to save his skin and, now he was in the clear, wished to change back again. So Zapata sent him a test. Several of his men had been guilty of crimes of robbery and rape and he told the Colonel that he wanted them shot. The Colonel had the men shot, 150 of them. Even so, Zapata was uneasy, but the men and guns were very badly needed and he agreed to go and meet the colonel and arrange terms.

This is supposed to be an eye-witness account of what happened: "Guajardo was at Jonocatepec, which place he claimed to have captured from Caranzista troops under Pablo Gonzalez. When we heard this, our General Zapata gave orders that a letter should be taken to Guajardo telling him we would meet him in Telpazingo. He was to come and meet the chief with only thirty men, and General Zapata would have thirty men also. The chief ordered his men to retire and, taking only thirty, went to Telpazingo. We waited for Colonel Guarjardo, who arrived at four in the afternoon, not with thirty men but with six hundred cavalry-men and a machine-gun.

General Zapata went out to meet him and they embraced. 'Colonel, I congratulate you', our chief said, smiling.

At 10 pm we left Telpazingo for Chinameca and stayed the night at a place called 'the duck pond'. At about 8 am we went down to Chinameca. The chief had about 150 men who had come to Telpanzingo to join him. These men were drawn up in the Plaza while the chief and the colonel went to discuss plans.

Suddenly there came word that an enemy force was drawing near. The chief ordered Colonel Jose Rodriguez of his escort to go and scout in the direction of Santa Rita. As they were leaving, Colonel Guajardo came up, saying, 'General Zapata, you give the orders. Shall I send cavalry or infantry?' 'Send infantry, for the plain is very broken up', the chief replied.

We went back to the Hacienda of Chinameca after watching the plain for a while. We could see no enemy troops in sight. The chief had sent Colonel Palazios to talk to Guajardo and he asked to see him. The chief was invited to go into the Hacienda and he leapt on his horse, a horse that had been presented to him the very day before by Guajardo. 'Let only ten men come with me', he said.

The rest of us lay in the shade, our rifles stacked, confidently we waited. The guard drawn up at the gate made as if to do him the honours. The bugle sounded the salute and, just as he reached the gate, the soldiers, who were presenting arms suddenly, without warning, took aim and fired, and our General Zapata fell, never to rise again. Morales died at the same time, and Palazios must have been assassinated inside the Hacienda. The surprise was terrible. Suddenly all the soldiers that Guajardo had hidden began firing from all around. We did not have a chance. This was the tragedy, this was how the perfidious Guajardo betrayed the noble confidence of our chief. So died Emiliano Zapata. So die all brave men, men of honour, when their enemies, unable to defeat them any other way, resort to treason and crime."

So the great agrarian leader was dead. His brother managed to escape and was last heard of fighting as an officer in a revolutionary army in Nicaragua.

The Carranza Government paid Colonel Guajardo 100,000 pesos for the murder of Emiliano Zapata. Three months later he was shot by the same Government for treason, or so they said. Carranza was fleeing Mexico City two years later with much of the money from the treasury, when he was overtaken and killed. Obregon was shot dead in Mexico City, and Pancho Villa was murdered a few years later. Eventually the Mexican revolution fizzled out, leaving things perhaps a little better for the common people, perhaps not.

Zapata has become a legend among the Indians. His ghost rides the trails of Morelos, they say, scattering silver Pesos for his people, the Indians. A million songs have been written telling of his glorious victories. Statuettes of him are made lovingly in clay, mounted on his horse, machete in hand.

He found Mexico enslaved. He left nearly one-third of Mexico free, and with all of it inspired with the idea of freedom to live as one chooses. His victories have grown hollow now. Governments have come and gone. The Indian has dropped into a sleep of hopelessness, but once there was hope, and he provided it.

Some of the changes he brought lasted a long time. Tens of thousands of public papers, deeds, property certificates, death certificates, records and maps were destroyed in the belief that if these things were destroyed the land would be free for the Indian. This belief was true for some time at least.

Titles to more than 500 Haciendas had been destroyed. Their terrain is occupied, but not cultivated, by three or four million Indians.

He was a far from perfect man, but he did more for the Mexican Indian than all the liberals, before or since. He was a peasant who knew what his people wanted and tried to get it for them, and, in the end he gave his life for them.

JACK STEVENSON

(Text of a talk given to LAG)

MANIFESTO TO MEXICANS, issued by Emiliano Zapata and signed by him and thirty-five officers, August 1914.

The Revolutionary movement has reached its culminating point, and it is time, therefore, for the country to know the truth.

The existing revolution did not make itself for the purpose of satisfying the interests of any one personality, of any one group or of any one Party. The existing revolution recognises that its origins lie deeper and that it is pursuing higher finalities.

The peasant was hungry, was enduring misery, was suffering from exploitation, and if he rose in arms it was to obtain the bread the greed of the rich denied him, to make himself master of the land the egoistic landed proprieter kept for himself, to vindicate the dignity the slave-driver iniquitously trampled on daily. He threw himself into revolt, not to conquer illusory political rights which do not feed him, but to procure for himself the piece of land which must supply him with food and liberty, a happy fireside and a future of independence and growth.

They make a lamentable mistake who suppose that the establishment of a military Government, that is to say, a despotic Government, will ensure the pacification of the country. It can be obtained only by the realisation of the double operation of reducing to impotence the elements of the ancient regime and creating new interests linked inextricably with the revolution, solidaric with it, in danger if it is in danger and prosperous if it becomes established and consolidated.

The first task, that of making it impossible for the reactionary group to be nay longer a danger, is carried out by two different methods: by the exemplary punishment of the chiefs, of the great criminals, of the intellectual directors and active elements of the conservative faction, and by attacking the pecuniary resources they employ to work up intrigues and provoke revolutions; that is to say, by the subdivision of the properties of the Hacienda owners and politicians who have put themselves at the front of the organised resistance to the popular movement which began in 1910 and has attained its crowning point in 1914, after surviving the gallows of Ciudad Juarez and the reactionary crisis of the Ciudadela, a tragedy let loose by the Huerta dictatorship.

This subdivision is aided by the fact that the greater part, not to say the whole, of the cultivatable lands to be nationalised represents interests created under the shadow of the Porfirio Diaz dictatorship, inflicting great injury on the rights of a multitude of natives, small proprietors and victims of all kinds, who were sacrificed brutally on the altars of the ambitions of the powerful.

The second task, that of creating powerful interests akin to the revolution and in solidarity with it, will be brought to a happy conclusion when the natives, individually and in their communities, receive back the innumerable tracts of land of which they have been despoiled by the great landowners; and this great act of justice receives its complement, as regards those who have nothing and have had nothing, in the proportional repartition of the lands given to the dictatorship's accomplices or of those expropriated from idle proprietors who do not choose to cultivate their heritages. Thus there will be satidfied both the human demand for land and that appetite for liberty which is making itself felt throughout the Republic as the formidable reply to the savagery of the Hacienda owners which has maintained, even in the twentieth century and in the heart of free America, a system which the most

unfortunate serfs in the Middle Ages in Europe would hardly have endured.

The Plan of Ayala, which translates and incarnates the peasants ideals, satisfies both terms of the problem, for, while it treats the sworn enemies of the people as they deserve to be treated, reducing them by expropriation to impotence and innocuousness, it establishes, in articles 6 and 7, the two great principles of the return of stolen lands (an act of imperious justice) and the splitting-up of the expropriated cultivable lands (an act required alike by justice and expediency). . . .

It is certain that the deluded believe that the country is going to be contented (as it was contented in 1910) with an electoral pantomime, from which are to arise new and apparently honest men who are to occupy the curule chairs, the seats in the Legislature, and the Presidency's lofty thrones; but they who judge the matter thus appear to ignore the fact that the country, during the crisis of the last few years, has reaped a harvest of lessons it can never forget, which will not permit it to lose its road, and had acquired a profound understanding of the causes of ill-being and the way to combat them. . . .

The country . . . wishes to break, once and for all, with the feudal epoch, which is now an anachronism. It wishes to destroy with one stroke the relationships of lord and serf, overseer and slave, which, in the matter of agriculture, are the only ones ruling from Tamaupilas to Chiapas and from Sonora to Yucatan.

The country people wish to live the life of cultivation; to breathe the air of economic liberty which as yet they have not known; and this they never can do while there still remains on foot the traditional lord of the scaffold and the knife, who disposes at whim of the persons of his labourers; an extortioner of wages, who annihilates them with excessive tasks, brutalises them by misery and ill treatment, dwarfs and exhausts his race by the slow agony of slavery and the enforced withering of human beings whose stomachs and empty brains are very hungry.

First, a military and then a parliamentary government, with adminstrative reforms, that the reorganisation may be able to last; ideal purity in the management of the public funds; official responsibilities scrupulously exacted; liberty of the press, for those who do not know how to write; liberty to vote, for those to whom the candidates are unknown; the correct administration of justice for those who never will employ a lawyer — all these democratic pettinesses, all these fine words in which our grandfathers and fathers took such a delight, have lost today their magic attraction and significance to the people. The people have seen that with elections and without them, with suffrage and without it, with the dictatorship of Porfirio Diaz and with the democracy of Madero, with the press gagged and with the press given the fullest liberty, always and in all circumstances it has still to chew the cud of its bitter lot, to endure its miseries, to swallow humiliations that know no end. For this reason, and with abundantly good cause, it fears that the liberators of today may prove themselves like the leaders of yesterday, who whittled away at Ciudad Juarez their beautiful radicalism, and in the National Palace forgot all about their seductive promises.

Therefore the Agrarian Revolution, distrusting chiefs who are looking for their own triumph, has adopted, as a precaution and as a guarantee, the most just rule that the revolutionary leaders of all the country shall be the ones to choose the first magistrate as Provisional President, charged with the duty of calling the elections; for it knows well that on the Provisional President

depends the future of the revolution and, along with that, the fate of the Republic.

What could be more just than that all those interested — the chiefs of the groups engaged in the fight, the representatives of the people in arms — should agree in the selection of the functionary in whose hands there must be placed the tabernacle of the revolution's promises, the sacred ark of the people's aspirations? Why should the so-called Constitutionalists fear the crucible of revolutionary revision or shrink from rendering tribute to the democratic principle that the candidate should be discussed freely by those interested?

Any other method of procedure will not only be disloyal but dangerous, for the Mexican people has shaken off its indifference, has recovered its courage and will not be the one to allow others to erect their own Government on its back.

There is still time to reflect and avoid the conflict. If the Leader of the Constitutionalists considers that he has the popularity needed to stand the proof of its submission to a vote of the revolutionaries, let him submit to it without vacillation; and if the Constitutionalists truly love the people and understand what they demand, let them do homage to its soverign will, accepting with sincerity and without any reticences the Plan of Ayala — expropriation of the lands for the sake of public utility, expropriation of the property of the people's enemies, and restitution to the towns and communities of the domains of which they have been despoiled.

If that is not done they may rest assured that the agitation of the masses will continue, that the war will go on in Morelos, in Guerrero, in Puebla, in Oaxaca, in Mexico, in Tlaxcala, in Michoacan, in Hidalgo, in Guanuato, in San Luis Potosi. in Tamaulipas, in Durango, in Zacatecas, in Chihuahua; wherever there are lands redivided or to be redivided, and the great movement of the south, supported by all the country population of the Republic, will continue until, conquering all opposition and combating all resistance, it shall finally have snatched by the hands of its powder-blackened warriors, the lands which its false liberators have undertaken to keep from it.

The Agrarian Revolution, calumniated by the enemy's press, unrecognised by Europe, understood with great exactitude by the diplomacy of North America and yet viewed with little interest by its sister nations of South America, liftes on high the banner of its ideals, that those who have been deceived may see it, and that it may be contemplated by the egoists and the perverse, by those who deafen their ears to the lamentations of the suffering people, to the cries of mothers who have lost their sons, and to the enraged shouts of the strugglers — the strugglers who do not wish to see, and who will not see, their aspirations for liberty and their glorious dreams of redemption for their people brought to naught.

'It is better to die on your feet than to live on your knees'

ZAPATA

'As long as we have not achieved victory over our common enemy...as long as we have not guaranteed the freedom won with our own hands and weapons, we will continue to struggle for the freedom of the people, but under no circumstances will we struggle for the power or for the intrigues of charlatan politicians'

MAKHNO

'We have always lived in slums and holes in the wall. We will know how to accommodate ourselves for a time. For you must not forget, we can also build. It is we who built those palaces and cities here in Spain and America and everywhere. We, the workers, can build others to take their place. And better ones. We are not in the least afraid of ruins. We are going to inherit the earth. There is not the slightest doubt of that. The bourgeoisie might blast and ruin its own world before it leaves the stage of history. We carry a new world here in our hearts. That world is growing this minute.'

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